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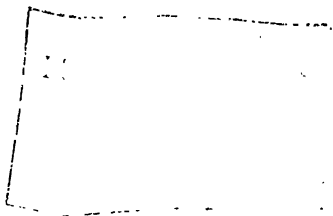
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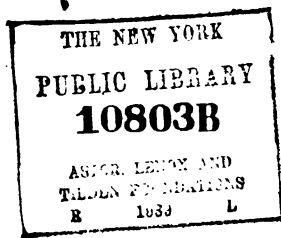


TUMBLE DOWN HOUSE

Prose and Poems

BY
NAN TERRELL REED

SAULSBURY PUBLISHING COMPANY
BALTIMORE, MD.



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BY NAN TERRELL REED

J. F. TAPLEY CO.
NEW YORK

INTRODUCTION

THIS little book of PROSE and POEMS by Nan Terrell Reed, is a class of literature that is provokingly humorous, a bit fantastic, yet sweet and enjoyable.

Nan Terrell Reed, born in Connecticut, is a woman with a strong character, endowed with a clear brain, a quick sympathy, and a heart that is alive to all the beauties of nature. She is a charmingly sweet person, quiet and unassuming.

While not as yet widely known in the literary world, she is a real genius. As is seen from her literary efforts, she was born with a marvelous gift and has wonderful powers of expression. Writes with an enthusiastic ardor, a dash of recklessness and has a mind that is both alert and inquisitive.

The evidence is overwhelming that Nan Terrell Reed will be one of the foremost writers of prose and poems of her day. We are sure her literary efforts will be happily crowned with success.

HOWARD ALLEN MICHENER.

Rose Hill, Magnolia, Md.

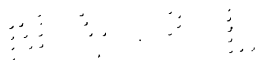
July 16th, 1919

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TO THE BUILDER OF BRIDGES

OH! clever Builder, if you are wise—
Wise as your prophets claim,
You will open the road
That leads my feet
On to the City of Fame.
You will build by the way a Castle of Dreams
Full of the beautiful things,
Where all day long in a golden cage
The Bluebird of Happiness sings.

You will build me a Bridge where I may pass
Back through the Forest of Years,
Over the Mountains
Of Worry and Care,
Over the River of Tears;
Where I may see with the Eyes of Youth,
And hold again in my hand
The Treasure of Life, that lies unspoiled
On the Border of Childhood Land.



THE CASTLE OF DREAMING

LITTLE gold heads
Like chrysanthemums nodding;
Little sweet mouths
Like the red of a rose;
You are so dear
When a soft, childish slumber
Beckons the time for
Your eyelids to close.

Little glad hearts
Like the buds of a flower,
Pausing to burst
To the richness of bloom.
What do you care
For a future that's calling,
Full of the blending
Of brightness and gloom.

Little child souls
In the Castle of Dreaming,
While overhead
Are the fairies of birth,
You, unaware
Of the years that shall follow,
Wait for the kiss
Of the Princes of Earth.



ONE DAY AT A TIME

ONE day at a time—
It's all in the knowing
We can accept
What a Future shall give
As pages, where each daily lesson is showing
Torn from the Book of our learning to live.

One day at a time—
Is all that's required.
Just from a sunrise
To falling of night;
Smiling altho we are troubled and tired,
One day at a time, we can try to do right.

One day at a time—
Too busy to borrow
Out of the past
A futile regret,
Keeping the good that comes from the sorrow,
All of the rest it is wise to forget.

One day at a time—
Some heart may depend
On your little day
To make it seem bright.
Who knows but the service of living may end
With this little day, as it slips into night.

'FRAID

JOHNNY JONES was slow as 'lasses ;
Jimmy Brown was keen on fight.
Didn't need a provocation
Just to show the world his might.

So he picked on Johnny daily,
Taunted him with being 'fraid ;
Johnny always acted wooden
At suggestions that he made.

Jimmy like a rooster flaunted
In the school yard day by day,
While the Jones boy, even tempered,
Slowly ambled on his way.

One day Jimmy, like a smarty,
Called the "Stars and Stripes" a "rag",
As above the children's playground
Floated out the country's flag.

Johnny Jones was slow as 'lasses,
But at home he had been taught
That his father like a hero
In the Civil War had fought ;

That a brother, whom his mother
Hardly could afford to spare,
Had been fighting with the soldiers
In a town called—"Over There."

And the big-eyed children wondered
At the miracle they saw,
When an irate Johnny planted
Smashing blows on Jimmy's jaw.

Johnny Jones was pretty valiant
Though he trod the peaceful way—
Slow as 'lasses, never taking
Part in quarrels every day,

But a something was included
In the insult Jimmy made,
And the loyal little Johnny
Found a heart that wasn't—'fraid.

FAME

I WISHED to-day
On a load of hay
That the World would bring me Fame;
That the second leaf of a little book
Would sometime bear my name.

How many desires
From Ambition's fires
Are whispered in just this way—
To the far-off stars of the silent night,
Or a passing load of hay.

ART

THE Charcoal Stub and the Fixatif
Leaned over a Paper white,
And the Fixatif gave a sticky smile
At the Charcoal, black as night.

Said he—"I'm sick of my yellow tint,
And I cannot tell, I'm sure,
Why you should be so smutty-like
And Paper look so pure."

The Charcoal Stub grew angry then,
And in his jealous rage
He wept some bitter tears of hate
Upon the spotless page.

The Fixatif began to sniff,
And spit his nasty glue,
And said—"You won't look quite so nice
When both of us get through."

But on the piece of Paper, where
The hateful tears were shed,
Appeared a lovely picture of
A woman's face instead.

You did not know, old Charcoal Stub,
That tear drops from your eyes,
With Fixatif's eternal glue
Could so immortalize.

THE JOURNEY

I'm weary and tired from my travels;
And my clothes are all covered with dust;
And the heart in my body is heavy,
And only beats on—for it must.

I've hated the stones on the journey;
I've carried the weight of a load,
With only this one consolation—
The joy of selecting the road.

I haven't a sense of direction;
I haven't a definite goal;
I only thank God, there's remaining
A little, lone song in my soul.

A song—when I've dropped by the wayside
Too dusty, and tired, and footsore,
That helps me to pull up my shoulders
And start on the journey once more.

Oh! Life, at the Gateway of Pleasure
You robbed me in taking your toll,
But all unaware you have left me
A little lone song in my soul.

THE SPIRIT IN BACK

YOU'RE not a beastly slacker,
Just because you didn't fight,
If the reason that you didn't
Was a reason that is right.

You're not a blooming quitter,
If the Army, or the Boss,
Or a circumstance decided
That you shouldn't "go across."

You're just as much the hero,
If you fought, but couldn't share
The glory that is shining
From the little Croix-de-Guerre.

You're not a rotten coward,
If you felt a thrill of fear
When the first big sound of battle
Came a-smashing in your ear.

It's whether you were ready,
As the shells went whizzing by,
To meet it like a soldier
Who was not afraid to die.

THE POPPY

LIKE a Poppy in a field of daisies
You have always seemed to me,
As I watched you in the different phases
Of a life so trouble-free.

And those who do not see the blue of skies,
Or note the green of velvet grass,
Will never fail to turn admiring eyes
To greet a Poppy as they pass.

Oh! lovely little flower—after all,
A breeze can bow your silken head;
A day or two, and then the petals fall
And leave a crimson Poppy—dead.

THE TUMBLE-DOWN HOUSE

It's only a little tumble-down house,
That's sadly in need of repair—
With a rickety fence, and a yard unkept—
Yet the Spirit of God dwells there.

It's there you may learn the portion of joy
That lies in an every-day thing
From a woman with hair as white as the frost
And a heart as young as the Spring.

Yes—only a little tumble-down house
That's sadly in need of repair—
The home of a mother with toil-worn hands—
Yet the Spirit of God dwells there.

A LETTER FROM ME AN' BAMBY-DOG

GEE! we're lonely,
Me an' Bamby.
Seems just like no little heart
Was at home to keep us comfy,
No one here to take our part.

Gee! we like you,
Me an' Bamby.
No one else can take your place.
We go 'round so sort of stupid
Looking for the absent face.

Gee! we miss you,
Me an' Bamby.
We ain't got nowhere to go;
Some one's gone who understands us
When the "tides of Life ebb low."

Me an' Bamby
Ain't so selfish
That we wouldn't have you stay,
But we only want to tell you
How we feel when you're away.

CHRISTMAS TIRED

I'm so tired
No poem dances
Through the cobwebs of my brain;
I'm afraid no thought of Nancy's
Ever will be fresh again.

I'm so tired
That Christmas only
Means a tinsel on a tree.
Holidays and life are lonely
When you're tired as you can be.

HOME

It's a wonderful thing to be so sweet,
That you're livable every day,
And wherever you go
They like you so
They're anxious to have you stay.

It's a wonderful thing to know at home
There are those who want and miss you,
And wonderful arms
To hold you fast
And wonderful lips to kiss you.

SAFETY FIRST

THE busy stork one July night
Planned out a journey for hurried flight,
And soaring out of the old, cold North
He landed in town on July Fourth.

He stopped as he heard the fireworks' noise,
And gazed at the clamoring girls and boys;
He shook his head in a doubtful way,
And said—"I've chosen an awful day—

"A child that's born on the Fourth, I fear,
Would crave this tumult throughout the year;
I'd better not land while the rockets burst
But wait till the morrow brings—"Safety First."

So he hovered over the little town,
And then in the morning fluttered down,
And a little soul was started forth,
While the stork went back to the old, cold North.

Though sometimes now, as the years go by,
The heart of the man breathes forth a sigh
And longs for the trumpets noisy blare,
For the stars that fall from the rockets glare—

Still—fireworks burn in a cruel way,
And rockets only last for a day,
And he hears the voice of the old stork call
That "Safety First" is the best of all.

THE MOVIE

I BELIEVE that Life is a Movie,
And the films that each of us make
Are full of humor and drama,
And the hearts we gladden or break.

I believe in the World's Big Picture
It's the human things that count,
And over the ever-changing screen
It is Love that is Paramount.

THE PUZZLE

LIFE is a puzzle of thoughts and dreams,
Of longing, and heartache and pain;—
The pieces seem always too hopelessly mixed
To put back together again.

But sometimes I think when I'm lying awake,
Alone, in the stillness of night,
That Fate, after all, will reach out her hand
To move them—and make it right.

The loves unattained, the hopes unfulfilled,
The things we have dreamed of, or done,
Will change from the thousand scattered bits
And perfectly blend—into one.

THE TICKER

To my tick-a-tick, tick,
It is BUY or SELL quick
As I run off a yard or a mile;
Some gaze on my tape with pain and despair,
While others around me can smile.
For—I am the ruler of millions of men;
Of millions of dollars as well.
I can give a man happiness, future and wealth—
Or make his whole life look like H——

LOVE

I've seen men love
Where Love dwelt not
In some secluded garden spot,
And neither moon
Nor starry skies
Could lend a radiance to Love's eyes.

I've seen men love
In some dim shop
Where clanging wheels that never stop,
And poverty, and pain, and tears,
Were daily ringing in Love's ears.

I've seen men love
When Love had fled
From other eyes, and left them dead
To all the dreams that once were there,
To everything that Love found fair.

I've seen men love,
And cease to love—
And still beneath the stars above
There is no thing to take its place,
Or light again its dying face.

YOUR EYES

Your eyes are not like summer skies,
Nor like the ocean blue;
They're not the brown they say
Denotes a heart that's fond and true.

They're not the shade of violets,
Or dangerous siren green,
Or are they eyes of steady gray
With insight cold and keen.

They're just your eyes, the little doors
Where all your soul looks through,
And I shall love them most of all
Because they're part of you.

SMOKE

A MAN swore off the first of the year
From smoking—"vile cigarettes;"
His friends looked at him with doubtful smiles
And placed on him several bets.

He said—"I believe it's a good resolve,
And it only lasts twelve months,
So, though I may find it a little hard,
It will show them my will for once."

And many a day throughout the year
He longed for the pungent smell
Of the curling smoke that winds itself
Around the brain like a spell.

Until at last with his penance done,
He hurried to purchase a store
That was quite sufficient to last a month—
Though he fancied he needed more.

He was sure that the taste of the *very first*
Would everything else surpass,
But he knew, as he smoked, that he'd spent a year
In the worship of dried-up grass.

Have you noticed too, that all through life
As you travel along the way
Toward the thing that dances beyond your reach,
And you hope to obtain some day,

That it seems when you touch the distant goal
The object has changed its form,
And the ardor you felt in swift pursuit
Has suddenly grown—luke-warm.

MARY ELIZABETH JEFFERSON

MARY ELIZABETH JEFFERSON

Went to the school-house on the hill
In a little town called Talcotville,
And her face was thin, and her shoes were worn,
And her clothes were faded and patched and torn,
And the children laughed at her with scorn—
And Mary Elizabeth always heard,
But never answered a single word.

Mary Elizabeth Jefferson

Hadn't an extra share of looks,
But she knew a lot when it came to books,
And she used to dream of the things she read
When she lay at night in her wooden bed,
With an arm beneath a tousled head;
And her heart was sad, and her thoughts were old,
But Mary Elizabeth never told.

Mary Elizabeth Jefferson

Plodded on till the dreams came true,
And she did the things that she planned to do
By the very force of her brain and will,
And those from the school-house on the hill
Are talking about the wonder still,
And credit the town with what was done
By Mary Elizabeth Jefferson.

Mary Elizabeth Jefferson
Has plenty of fame and riches now,
But the hurt of life is there somehow
For a child too thin, with shoes too worn ;
With clothes that were faded and patched and torn ;
Lonely, and treated with bitter scorn—
A child so sad, with thoughts so old
Who never answered and never told.

MY AEROPLANE

As I fly from New York in my aeroplane
And gaze on its buildings so high,
I look back with feelings I cannot explain,
And bid dear old New York—"Good-by."

Supposing I land in the cool, briny deep,
Or maybe on some lonely isle;
Supposing I land on the top of a tree
With no one inside of a mile;

Supposing the engine won't do the "right thing,"
And I'm cremated on the descent,
If nothing is left to identify me—
Then no one will have to lament.

PARODY

A FOOL there was, and he lost his wife,
Even as you and I,
And then at the end of the trouble and strife
He found she had formed quite a part of his life,
As maybe do you and I.

Oh! the days he spent, and the ways he went
Because of his selfish whim,
But he never could know nor understand
(His sort is quite common in any land),
That the fault lay alone with him.

Because of the ache of her heart, and its break
She had a desire to be free,
For the most of her lived, though the some of her
died,
And she still retained a considerable pride—
Just as with you and me.

The Fool brushed aside the poor little bride,
And left her alone and neglected,
Then he said it was wrong—(I say it was not)
When a lover of old, who chanced on the spot,
Just offered a love that protected.

It isn't the fact that the Fool hadn't tact
To act like a man when he lost her,
It's the coming to know that he never could know,
(For the depth of his brain wasn't fashioned so),
The every-day pain he had cost her.

SPRING

At the time of the year
When there's sure to appear
Many poems of depth and duration,
On the wonderful Spring,
And the joys it will bring
To the whole of the raptured creation,

I cannot expound
On the sight and the sound;
On the skies and the grass underneath,
But I always can say
In a forcible way—
“Warm weather will be a relief.”

RUN DOWN

IF a woman's disposition gets a sort of ragged edge,
Or a man keeps on with smoking,
And forgets to sign the pledge,
Then they go to see a doctor—
He's the wise man of the town—
He says, "Your nerves are shattered,
And I think you're all run down."

Our good old Pilgrim Fathers would rise if they
could see
The present sickly sample
Of our young humanity.
We have our Christian Science,
And a lot of clever men,
But there isn't any mortal
Who can wind us up again.

I might make a few suggestions, or propose a better
scheme,
Or write a few more verses
Upon this little theme,
But I'm growing awful jumpy,
And my forehead wears a frown;
I think my nerves are shattered,
And I guess I'm all run down.

BUNK

Tom says that poetry is bunk,
And that a loving wife
Would not be wasting paper
Writing verses all her life.

And yet, if I should ever win
A little share of Fame,
Why! Tom would be so happy that
He wouldn't look the same.

The worst of luck has always rained
Upon my poor old head,
And so I'll bet they won't accept
My poems till I'm dead.

But won't my virtue take a leap
When I am laid away,
If some poor little book of mine
A royalty should pay.

I DUNNO!

I used to think that mebbe life
Held somethin' for a poor man's wife
Besides the work, and pinch and sich
That ain't inflicted on the rich—
But I dunno!

I used to see a little gleam
Of sunlight from a golden beam
A-shinin' through my special cloud,
But now it wraps me like a shroud—
And I dunno!

I used to think that every one
Got out of life his share of fun,
But Gee! I guess it passed me by,
And sometimes I jest want to die—
But I dunno!

THE BUTTERFLY

You say I'm a Butterfly, Mary Jayne,
Was I once a cat'piller, too;
Did I go to sleep in an old cocoon
And change into something new?
Well, you were a little, teeny, brown seed
And you went to bed in the ground.
Why! they put you so deep in the dark, cold earth
I was sure you could never be found.

But when I came out of my little gray house
I found you a pretty pink Rose,
Though how little seeds get out of their beds
Is a secret that nobody knows.
You say I'm a Butterfly, Mary Jayne,
A pink Rose I'm going to call you,
And a Butterfly finds a Rose so sweet;
Does a Rose like a Butterfly, too?

“SOME FOLKS”

WHEN your spirits are low,
And Life's pretty slow,
Then get a good book out, and read it;
If you're too cross to talk
You can go for a walk
In the woods—and you probably need it.

If you grouch all the while,
And don't learn to smile,
Your face will look ugly to men,
And the things you regret
You ought to forget,
Or try not to do them again.

It's all very nice,
And splendid advice
For the World to live up to each day,
But I reckon you know,
For we've all found it so—
It's harder to *do* than to *say*.

SAYINGS

They say—"He that is down need fear no fall," but he still has to worry about the kicks.

Love grows dim as Obligation grows bright.

It's nice to have the whole world like you some, and some like you a whole lot.

One of the troubles between mother-in-law and wife is that they try too hard to "get along."

Competition is great before marriage, and dangerous afterward.

If you can't change your environment, don't be ashamed of it; if you can, get busy and do something.

Some people say the rich aren't the happiest people in the world. Maybe not, but it's fine to have something to buy a diversion with, when you are unhappy.

There are people who are so stingy that they wouldn't fall in love, for fear it would cost something.

Some people who throw a fit about a low neck, and a high skirt, have minds that wouldn't bear the same amount of exposure.

Quite often those who can't get to business on time, can't get business.

Don't be a quitter; wait until the end of the show anyway—often the last act is the best.

Don't let your thoughts get into a rut. The way to keep the body young, is to keep the spirit young.

If the Lord made you homely, put so many pleasant lines into your face that no one will remember it's plain.

Some people's goodness is like pins that stick out from them to make you uncomfortable. The best goodness unconsciously throws out a wonderful influence.

If you are well-bred, you don't have to tell the world—it shows.

If mothers realized what an asset good manners were, they would spend more time instilling them into their children.

The selfish people take the "right of way," while the unselfish crawl up onto the bank to let them pass.

If we were as tolerant of others as we expect them to be of us, this world would indeed be a "free country."

We are none of us absolutely, perfectly honest; we consciously, or unconsciously cheat about some little thing.

When you feel like saying something nasty, remember that your victim may be as sensitive as you are, and think how long you felt the sting of an unkind word. If he isn't sensitive, it would have been wasted anyway.

Don't feel disgusted with people because they are stupid. You might better envy them their peace of mind.

If the little boy isn't taught to have respect and consideration for other people, how can you expect the grown man will.

Most mothers are inflicted with a form of conceit in regard to their children, that invariably places the child in the light of—"The king can do no wrong."

Those who can't make up their minds are often those whose minds are in such small pieces that they can't get them together.

Did you ever notice that the man who is looking for a perfect woman for a wife, usually has the soul of a shrimp?

Some people are clouds, and some are sunshine. Think yourself over, and see in which class you belong.

The friends who give you a whack, and say "Cheer up, don't grouch," are usually those with nothing much in their heads, and nothing at all in their hearts. When you get real sympathy, it comes from the fellow who says—"I understand, old chap, I've been through it too."

The conceited people are the happiest in the world, for no tortures of doubt, or pangs of envy can upset their equipoise.

The little things that a man does to, and for his fellow men, are lines that go to make up a picture of his soul.

Every one who comes into our lives leaves a thumb print. We are lucky if they don't leave a hole.

With proper time and treatment, barren ground may become a garden, or a gutter snipe a lady, but you can't raise a soul—it has to be inherent.

Enthusiasm is a fire that needs regulating so that it will keep us warm, and not burn us up.

The most essential thing in life is to have an interest in something.

If you don't do something every day to make life a little better for some one else, you will never grow better yourself.

It's all right to weep a little. You know the Lord believes in rain, but you want to be sure to let the sun shine often, so the things in your life can grow.

Try to be big. It's a setting-up exercise for the soul.

Some people who are sweet in public, are Devils to live with at home.

Don't let the worship of money loom so large that it shuts out the other important things in life.

It isn't a bit strange that two married people quarrel, when it's hard to live with your dearest relations every day without friction.

More of us would believe in religion if those who preached it—lived it.

It's no credit to a person to be good if they have never had the opportunity or desire to be otherwise.

Some folks are exposed to the best things of life, but they don't catch them.

There are so many unlivable people. One reason is that most of us want to get more out of life than we give, and lots of us want something for nothing.

You don't want to put off enjoying life, because you may be picked off the Earth any minute.

You can get a very good insight into a person's nature by knowing the things that make him laugh.

One woman never knows whether another is really her friend until they have had a man in common.

Jealousy is a double-header—it hurts you as much as the one you take it out on.

Immorality is easier to tolerate than vulgarity.

It's just as disgusting for a person to eat too much as to drink too much, and it's just as detrimental to the system; the only thing is that the world doesn't condemn the former.

Public Opinion is sometimes a nasty old cat who minds your business.

Public Opinion is sometimes a lot of old ideas that came out of the Archives of Custom. No one wants to live up to them, but nearly every one is afraid not to.

Public Opinion is sometimes the Board of Censors that rules all the exciting plays off the Stage of Life—after *they* have seen the show.

When we talk to a good many people, it's like throwing our thoughts overboard. We never seem to get anything back. But perhaps some of them do wash up on a foreign shore, and comfort a lonely heart.

You may think you've reached your "elastic limit," but there's considerable stretch to the human heart.

Don't go around sticking pins into people's joy balloons—they'll burst soon enough without it.

There are two things that help a lot—a sense of humor, and a love of books.

You can be wicked if you want to, but you had better be sure you are willing to pay the price.

Selfish women often train their children into the best channels, because they teach them to serve instead of receive.

If you like a thing, say so. It doesn't cost but a little effort, and it means a lot to the other fellow.

No matter what good advice we give to the love-lorn, we'll be the same old fool when the disease hits us.

Don't be too severe. Many a beautiful flower wilts and dies under the cold blast of a frost.

Listen to the other man's troubles. It helps him, and it may make your own seem insignificant.

For the sake of posterity you ought to remember that the example you set your children will be handed down to the second generation.

Many a man who calls his stenographer a bone-head, couldn't write a paragraph without an error, and a lot of them couldn't spell the letters they dictate.

If you want a home, marry a man who hasn't had one.

If men were as careful about offending their wives as they are their servants, a lot of women would be more contented.

Men who spend a dollar a day on cigars, often can't bear to have their wives go to the "movies" twice a week.

Men marry women because they think they are pure, and feel much upset when they find them only cold.

A man thinks a woman is either good, bad, or indifferent to the whole world, exactly as she has appeared to him, and yet most women are chameleons—and most men bring out in them the echo of the notes which sound in their own thoughts.

We often say—"I wish I were Mr. So-and-So," and yet if it were possible to trade places, there would be at least one thing in our own lives that we wouldn't care to give up.

Don't drag out the Ghosts of the Past any oftener than it's necessary to keep from making new ones.

There is a difference between Happiness and Contentment—Happiness is learning to live—with Love; Contentment is learning to live without Love.

Many a heart is as clumsy at Love, as an organ-grinder at a violin—you know how it sounds.

I used to know a man who said—"Some women have to do something they are sorry for, before they feel better."

Sometimes it takes only a little effort and kindling to start a fire, sometimes it takes a lot, but when it's out, it's out.

My father used to say it was the "Mosquitoes of

Life" that annoyed him, I suppose he would call them "Cooties" to-day.

Ordinarily we have no patience with the things we cannot understand.

If everything we thought and did showed on our faces, some of us would be arrested and put in jail.

If we are to choose the "Right Road," it's a pity there are not as many signs put up along the way as the Automobile Club of America furnishes. Even then, you know we might take a wrong turn on a dark night.

Nine out of every ten of the Big Crooks "Get away with it," it's the Little Amateur who is caught and punished.

One of the most cruel hurts of Life, is the injustice of things. That is why some of us believe in Heaven. We like to think that somewhere it is all made right.

Half the world has to go to work somewhere from dawn to dark, and then go home to bed only to get up again and do it all over every other day in the week. They might just as well be in jail, but thank God they don't usually have time to realize it.

You can get used to almost anything. There is nothing more monotonous than the tick of a clock, yet how many people notice it unless it's a very new one.

